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SOME FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE EXTENSION PROGRAMS  
IN CLOTHING

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Several extension clothing specialists have asked for information on the present outlook for prices of fabrics and ready-made garments as a basis for developing an extension clothing program for fall and winter of 1941-42. The home economists of the Federal Extension Service discussed this matter with Day Monroe and Ruth O'Brien of the Bureau of Home Economics. Dr. Monroe has provided the economic information given below.

Home construction of coats, dresses, and other articles of clothing will undoubtedly prove good business during the summer and fall of 1941 for those homemakers who have the skill and time available for such tasks. Wholesale prices of ready-to-wear clothing have already advanced 7 percent since the beginning of the year, as is shown by the following index numbers of wholesale prices issued by the Bureau of Labor Statistics:

Group and subgroup:	Jan. 4, 1941	May 31, 1941	Percentage increase
Textile products.....	74.3	83.2	12.0
Clothing.....	86.1	92.0	6.9
Cotton goods.....	74.4	91.9	23.5
Hosiery and underwear.....	61.3	62.6	2.1
Rayon.....	29.5	29.5	0
Silk.....	42.5	49.5	16.5
Woolen and worsted goods.....	87.8	93.2	6.2
Other textile products.....	73.7	91.7	24.4
Hides and leather products.....	102.5	107.8	5.2
Shoes.....	107.3	110.1	2.6
Hides and skins.....	101.2	117.5	16.1
Leather.....	93.6	98.0	4.7
Other leather products.....	98.4	100.6	2.2

Retail prices of winter garments will reflect both the advances in prices of materials and the higher labor costs, due to shortage of workers, since the beginning of 1941.

Retail prices of yard goods generally advance less rapidly than wholesale prices; the retailer may not mark up prices of stocks on hand. The homemaker, therefore, may in some instances be able to buy materials advantageously at this time. Her labor as a seamstress is worth more (according to wage rates) than it was a year ago.



# THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

The history of the United States is a story of growth and change. It begins with the first settlers who came to the continent in search of a new life. They found a land of opportunity, but also a land of challenge. The early years were marked by conflict and struggle, but the spirit of the American people was one of freedom and independence. Over the years, the United States has grown from a small colony to a great nation, and its history is a testament to the power of the human spirit.

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Year	Population	Area	Events
1776	3,900,000	3,500,000	Declaration of Independence
1789	4,000,000	3,500,000	Constitution adopted
1800	4,500,000	3,500,000	Move to Washington, D.C.
1820	9,600,000	3,500,000	Missouri Compromise
1850	23,000,000	3,500,000	California admitted as state
1860	39,000,000	3,500,000	Start of Civil War
1870	39,000,000	3,500,000	End of Civil War
1880	50,000,000	3,500,000	Spanish-American War
1890	62,000,000	3,500,000	End of Reconstruction
1900	76,000,000	3,500,000	Spanish-American War
1910	92,000,000	3,500,000	World War I
1920	106,000,000	3,500,000	Prohibition
1930	122,000,000	3,500,000	Great Depression
1940	132,000,000	3,500,000	World War II
1950	150,000,000	3,500,000	Korean War
1960	179,000,000	3,500,000	Civil Rights Movement
1970	205,000,000	3,500,000	Vietnam War
1980	226,000,000	3,500,000	Reagan Revolution
1990	249,000,000	3,500,000	Gulf War
2000	281,000,000	3,500,000	9/11 attacks
2010	312,000,000	3,500,000	Obama's presidency
2020	331,000,000	3,500,000	Covid-19 pandemic

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Cotton goods have advanced in wholesale price -23 percent during 1941. These price advances reflect manufacturing situations--not shortage of cotton. A schedule fixing ceiling prices for various grades of combed cotton yarn was issued by the Government on May 24. While these "ceilings" are considerably lower than the inflated level reached in the recent weeks prior to that date, they are still well above the average for recent years. It may be that local retail prices have not yet risen in line with higher wholesale prices. Wholesale prices of silk goods have advanced 16 percent, while those of rayon have remained unchanged. The latter may advance, however, along with prices of other textiles. The consumer can expect to find larger and larger proportions of rayon in mixed fabrics from now on. Most womens' ready-made dresses formerly made of silk are now wholly or in part of rayon, at no reduction in price. Many woolen garments already contain a large percentage of rayon.

Woolen and worsted goods have advanced 6 percent in wholesale price during 1941, because of the requirements of the defense program for uniforms, army blankets, and the like. So far there is no shortage of woolen goods, but retail prices will probably advance as production costs rise.

Shoes will cost more later this year since hides and leather are needed for defense. Advances in price from 10 to 15 cents a pair on cheaper shoes and up to 50 cents a pair on the comparatively expensive lines of footwear have already been announced. But a ceiling price, the second in which consumer goods are involved, has been set; this should mean substantial savings to civilian purchasers of shoes as well as to the Government. The wholesale prices of hides and skins have advanced 16 percent since the beginning of the year, and the future supply of hides will depend upon the adequacy of shipping facilities. Leather gloves will be higher when rising wholesale prices make themselves felt in retail stores.

Miss O'Brien states that the Bureau, anticipating that homemakers will be requesting helps in home sewing to a greater extent than in the past few years, because of the situation outlined above, has in preparation the following circulars: Coat Making, an illustrated bulletin and sets of pictorial posters on coat making which may be borrowed; buying Boys' Suits, an illustrated bulletin and pictorial poster sets. The Bureau is developing designs for "women at work"---outfits for women who do outdoor work on farms and for women who are entering defense industries; Work Clothes for Women, a multilith pamphlet showing these designs will be released this month.

Homemakers will need continued help in judging quality of fabrics, as there doubtless will be a tendency on the part of some manufacturers to lower quality rather than to raise price. Consumer efforts to get informative labels will be even more important than before. When the consumer buys a dress today at the same price in dollars that she paid last year, she must recognize that there is strong likelihood that quality has changed; workmanship may be less careful, less expensive materials may have been used, the manufacturer may have economized by using less cloth (watch for a smaller "36" than last year), or the material may not





be preshrunk. Some reduction of costs may not mean lowered durability; a cotton dress may wear as well if made of one of the heavier materials as if made of very fine, smooth goods. But other cost reductions may mean that period of wear will be shortened, that the garment will be less warm or more likely to shrink or fade.

The homemaker needs all her skill as a buyer in appraising her purchases this fall. She should read labels and use whatever other buying guides she can find. Labels specifying the kind and quality of wool in consumer goods will begin to appear on wool articles in the late summer. The new labeling program is the result of the Wool Products Labeling Act passed by Congress last year, which goes into effect July 14. But buying information concerning durability, warmth, shrinkage, color fastness, and care is not provided for in the Wool Act. Consumer-buyers should encourage the provision of such information on all yard goods and clothing.

Since the 1940 annual reports of extension workers have just been summarized, clothing specialists will be interested in some of the trends in the extension clothing program:

		<u>1938</u>	<u>1939</u>	<u>1940</u>
Number of individuals following recommendations in construction of clothing	Adults	302,572	294,904	315,955
	Juniors	298,484	309,284	325,869
	Total	601,056	605,188	641,824
Number of individuals following recommendations in improving care, renovation, and remodeling of clothing	Adults	235,119	228,744	254,763
	Juniors	93,075	94,141	99,989
	Total	328,194	322,885	354,752
Number of individuals following recommendations in selection of clothing	Adults	271,826	274,395	291,441
	Juniors	230,200	236,462	247,208
	Total	502,026	512,857	538,649
Number of sewing machines repaired		13,865	17,611	22,731
Total estimated savings due to clothing program	Adults	\$2,149,215	\$2,114,791	\$4,063,754
	Juniors	\$ 704,249	\$ 239,162	\$ 904,358
	Total	\$2,853,464	\$3,053,953	\$4,968,112

Note the decided increase in accomplishment in 1940 in all these items listed.



